Minutes from the meeting “Building future networks”

23 October 2015, at Sida, Stockholm

An event organised by Sida’s Unit for Research Cooperation together with the International Science Programme (ISP) at Uppsala University – agenda can be downloaded here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/gk21ka8ypxp8xtw/Building%20future%20networks_%20agenda%2020151023.pdf?dl=0

Welcome address and opening remarks– Ulf Källstig, Head of the Director-General’s Office at Sida.
Sida supports research training because we know that research-trained people are key for development - You can make a difference!

The purpose of Sida’s research capacity building programs is for countries to have the local capacity to do “Research in, by and for the South”.

The overall presentation from Sida is possible to download here: https://www.dropbox.com/s/vi5ruffc1mcjnzm/Sida%20presentation.pdf?dl=0

Research Cooperation and the bilateral programs– Teresa Soop, PhD, Research Advisor at Sida
The objective of Swedish development Aid is to “create opportunities for people living in poverty and under oppression to improve their living conditions”. In 2014 Sida handled 19,8 Billion SEK, of which Research cooperation was around 840 000 SEK. More about Swedish aid is found at Open Aid: www.openaid.se

Research cooperation funds a variety of partners:

- Global organisations (incl ISP and IFS)
- Regional organisations
- Bilateral cooperation (such as the ones most participants are involved in)
The support to research cooperation is governed by the “Strategy for Research Cooperation 2015-2021”, with the main objective to “strengthen research of high quality and of relevance to poverty reduction and sustainable development”. Please find it here: http://www.government.se/country-and-regional-strategies/2015/06/strategy-for-research-cooperation-and-research-in-development-cooperation-2015-2021/

The bilateral cooperation aims to building national research capacity, and we see the University as a hub. At the University an enabling environment for research needs to beis promoted, and research capacity could consist of the University’s commitment to research; Research Facilities; Research Expertise; Research Management Expertise; with a continuously improving learning.

Building research partnerships for mutual benefits- 15 years’ experience of Uganda-Sweden collaboration– Stefan Swartling Peterson, Professor of Global Health at Uppsala University

Can we build something different? We have to share and create networks, not everything must be unique, and we need to build something together. The importance of South-South cooperation is increasing; see to that you keep your contacts in your address book for future networking.

The cooperation is not only for the countries Sweden is cooperating in – you are an asset also to Sweden and research here!

Social innovation should be imbedded in research capacity development; society should participate in the definition of research areas.

It takes an entire system to produce good research! It is frustrating to work under the conditions where research is not adapted to these activities. Think new and be “change-agents”!

There is great value in the collaborative nature of research – value the research groups!

You can find very interesting data on gapminder.org to understand what the world looks like today.

Recommended article about the experience within Karolinska Institute and Makerere University: Enabling Dynamic Partnerships through Joint Degrees between Low- and High-Income Countries for Capacity Development in Global Health Research: Experience from the Karolinska Institutet/Makerere University Partnership.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/ik6t9vij50r57mz4/sewankambo%20plosmed.pdf?dl=0

Questions from the audience

- What do you think about a Post-doc sandwich programme?

  Teresa Soop: Sida has started to think about that and it is already included in some programs The point is for the junior PhD to be able to focus his/her time on research for some time. One way would be a post-doc at the home university with the possibly to go for a shorter stay at another university.

  Gity Behravan: (Senior Research Advisor, Research Cooperation Unit at Sida) we are also considering the possibility to share research across Africa, and work 1 or 2 years in each other’s universities.
Research and Innovation – the view from Sida Research Council, prof. Margareta Norell Bergendahl, KTH and Lars Anell, Chair of Sida’s Research Council

Lars Anell: This is a very good opportunity to share experiences and to learn about the other PhD students.

Margareta Norell: The collaboration is very important to build research capacity in your countries. I think is an advantage for you to have the opportunity to experience different structures and system. There is no single solution for all, but you can learn and share with others here.

Innovative thinking has to be fostered, and mainly young people will be driving this development. It is of great value to combine knowledge from different fields and different actors – most innovators are not researchers.

Comments from the audience:

Peter Sundin (Director of ISP): In the context of bilateral programs where ISP has quite good insights as we participate in the coordination of several programs, we can sometimes see that similar projects are going on in different universities and in different countries. More regional research collaboration and broader networks are important.

Supporting and Empowering Young Scientist in Developing World, Nighsty Ghezae, International Foundation for Science

The International Foundation for Science (IFS) provides competitive grants to early-career researchers in developing countries for the sustainable management of biological and water resources. Research interests in biodiversity; forestry; natural products; renewable energy and climate change; water resources; aquatic resources; agricultural crop production; animal production; food science; food security.

- Grants to individual researchers;
- Grants to small collaborative teams of researchers;
- Grants to put research into use and to enable innovation.

Grants are to citizens of eligible countries whose research is carried out in eligible countries, and who possess a minimum of a master’s degree or equivalent. Applicants must be attached to a national research institute, and should be younger than age 35 (men) or 40 (women).

How to apply? [http://www.ifs.se/ifs-programme/how-to-apply.html](http://www.ifs.se/ifs-programme/how-to-apply.html)

The presentation is available here: [https://www.dropbox.com/s/9085ipjopo5a9k/IFS%20Supporting%20and%20Empowering%20Young%20Scientists%20for%20Applicants%29.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9085ipjopo5a9k/IFS%20Supporting%20and%20Empowering%20Young%20Scientists%20for%20Applicants%29.pdf?dl=0)

Practical information, questions from the audience, Teresa Soop, PhD, Research Advisor at Sida

You can find some information on Sida’s website, for PhD students and post-docs:

2. www.sida.se/English/partners/our-partners/research-cooperation/guidelines-for-partners/national-research-development/

Please contact us (Teresa.soop@sida.se) if you think of other concrete information that you would like us to add there.

In the research cooperation with Bolivia we have a Facebook group where everyone can post information, publications, grants, on-line courses or interesting seminars. We have set up a similar group for all of you (PhD students and PhDs in the programs) and you can look for the group “Sida PhD network Global” in order to connect. Please tell others!

Other opportunities:

- Swedish Institute: Alumni events; Local Alumni Associations; Blog, FB, LinkedIn https://eng.si.se/areas-of-operation/scholarships-and-grants/alumni-network/
  Study Scholarships: https://eng.si.se/areas-of-operation/scholarships-and-grants/the-swedish-institute-study-scholarships/

Allowance and Insurance, questions from the audience, Aksana Mushkavets and Therese Rantakokko, ISP

- Visa/residence permit
  The situation about migration in Sweden is quite hard for everyone right now. The handling of your residencies will take much longer now than before, you need to plan well in advance!!
- Payments are made once a month (around 25th each month) either by deposit at:
  - Bank account in a Swedish bank
  - ICA Maestro card (Ica Maestro card – For students without a Swedish bank account)

Questions from the audience:

ISP cannot write a letter support for longer time than what you apply for. If you do this in time you will not have a problem, let’s try to cooperate.

If you need to change your address, for example when you ask to prolong your residency but need to go back to your home country before you get the card, you need to do that at the tax office.

ISP presentations are available here:

https://www.dropbox.com/s/khbzrbce2yl59z3/Leif%20ISP.pdf?dl=0

https://www.dropbox.com/s/lu0ttbfr40k4orb/Allowance%2BInsurance%2023%20October%202015.pdf?dl=0

Group discussion, Carmen Escobar, Sida

- What are the challenges to do research in our own countries? How can they be met?
**Challenges:**

Lack of resources (Funds): equipment, infrastructure, field work, human resources.

Bureaucracy. Limited access to information and publications. There are not enough networking. Policies are designed without the presence of researcher.

There is a lack of critical mass of researchers, and a huge backload with so many students per teacher – so there is no time to do research.

There is no tradition at the universities to do research, and the results are not considered important at the university. There is a lack of incentive system and support from the authorities or legal support.

There are not enough funds and the university budget does not consider research as a priority. There is also a mismanagement of the available funds.

How can they be met?

Start a political discussion that includes the government of our countries.

- **How can we as researchers participate in the development of our countries?**

  Try to teach new technologies. Inform government about research results. Participate in the design of policies and make countries take better decisions for the development. Make research more oriented to the society; relate the research to the unique needs of the country. Improve dissemination of results.

  We can start thematic groups inside the country, and as such contribute to the country’s development. We should link to the government’s different centres and inform them. We should include all different stakeholders in the thematic groups – share ideas and challenges and find ways forward.

  Couple to innovation processes so that the policy makers see the potential, and translate the results into the economic reality. Communication can be the challenge – even if the network and the knowledge are there.

  We need to increase incentives to do research, especially as when we are back in our countries we stop to do research.

- **How can we develop research networks South-South and South-North?**

  South- South: promote regional research network between research institutions. Regional conferences and symposia.

  South-South: we want to collaborate but we don’t have economic sources. There are some possibilities to push the government to take part of this collaboration.

  South-North: capacity building and financial support.
There is not point to talk about South-South and South-North, we should speak about global networks.

Co-authorship will be the result.

Teresa Soop: The South-South collaboration is often limited because of lack of funding. But the collaboration is not only about joint projects with destined funds, it is also about sharing knowledge and learning from each other. We have seen some examples where each group has its own funding in similar areas, and can collaborate even if it is not an officially funded joint project. If you see a need for joint calls, please tell the financers.

Ex: Network in mathematics programs within 5 countries, one of the collaboration with south-south. Try to shares students, the share and learn for weeks for shares experiences.

You should meet when you are at home also.

Promote staff exchange between universities, and promote possibilities to do post docs at different universities.

Experiences of a PhD student – Tumwesigye Behakanira Alex, Makerere University, Uganda

The experiences shared in this presentation are best understood by going through the excellent power point.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/rkauivowvfl4477/I5P%20Seminar%20October%202015%20Alex.pdf?dl=0